

# **Christine Chartwell A' la Cart**

## **A Purchase Parody Halloween Short**

It was a dark, cool October night. A lone student strut about, making his way back to the Neu from a late night More Store run. He put a chip to his mouth and with a crisp, crackle the chip was no more. Crunch. Crackle. Crunch. A brisk wind ruffled his hair as he picked up his pace, eagerly looking forward to getting out of the cold.

Suddenly, he stutter-stepped. A strange sound had begun to surface from his surroundings. Like a dull thumping or muffled heart-beat. He put a hand to his heart.

He knew he was out of shape, but couldn't believe that walking fast would be enough to put stress on his body. He strained his ears as he felt his heartbeat. The cadence didn't line up. The sound was something else, and the sound was gaining, getting closer.

With a nervous glance he took in his surroundings. Maybe it was some experimental band jamming out in the Stood. But as he made his way up to Lincoln Ave, he saw that the Stood was dressed down for the night. Lights out. Not a soul inside.

The sound was now distinctly coming from behind him and far outpacing his quick stride. The little hairs on his neck already on end from the chill night air, stretched just a little further, but he wouldn't look back. He wouldn't let himself be spooked by his own imagination.

His shadow came into view before him, as a pair of headlights shown upon his back, spilling a pool of light over him. "Thank God," he thought to himself, "Maybe I can hitch a quick ride."

He turned around, and the vehicle stopped. Abruptly, the sound ceased. He squinted into the lights, shielding his eyes to make out the shape, but it wasn't a car that rested before him.

A canopied roof, sat atop a small cart. It was a golf cart, King Chartwell's golf cart. As his eyes adjusted to the light, he still couldn't make out the figure of King Chartwell himself though, and something seemed wrong. The tires were flat, and now he could see that one of the canopy supports was broken, tearing through the canopy; a broken bone jutting jarringly through the skin. The normal soft hum of the electric engine was now a deeper, throatier timbre.

"What the hell...?" He whispered. As if on cue, the cart began to crawl towards him, the ruined tires squealing in protest.

“Hey, what’s going on?” He started shuffling backwards, unable to comprehend the monstrosity before him. Was this part of some elaborate movie hijinks? Had someone stolen the cart looking to stir up some mischief?

The mangled mobile picked up its pace, the rhythmic thumping drumming from it. The young man spun around on his heel and booked it. The bag of chips forgotten as he pumped his hands; clenched fists crunching the unfinished remains that lied therein.

His mind raced. He didn’t understand. All the buildings were closed and his apartment was still a good quarter mile off. But that wasn’t too far. He could make it. If he could just...

His foot caught on a speed bump sending him sprawling toward the pavement as he cried out. An angry, high pitched shriek sounded from the cart as it gunned over the speed bump, and a wide-eyed young man turned his head to see the dark, grinding gears of the carts’ underbelly come crashing down upon him.

Crunch. Crackle. Crunch.

# Thump. Thumpity. Thump. Thump.

Early the next morning a light mist hung over the campus, reddish as it dissipated in the morning sun. King Chartwell eased his car into his reserved spot in N1. Nestled right beside it was his pride and joy. Christine. He caressed the soft cover of his magnificent golf cart before settling inside.

Feeling around his pockets, he looked for the keys before spotting them on the dash, “Thank goodness no one found out I left the keys. Who knows what sort of trouble they could have caused with you last night.” He chuckled at the thought as he inserted the keys in the ignition. With a soft purr, the machine started up and he flipped a switch throwing the cart in reverse. Turning in his seat, he looked to see behind him and noticed several large containers of ketchup resting in the back.

“Huh, don’t remember leaving those there yesterday. Well now we’ll have enough to last through Halloweek.”

The cart hummed along happily, as he drove it towards the main dining hall.

